

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY OSD/ISA:CMCLAUGHLIN:MEM

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APPROVED BY EUR/RPM:EJSTREATOR

EUR/RPM:LTC RTHOMPSON

PM/ISO:LTC. F.FLEMINGS

OSD/PA: MR. BEECHER

OSD/ISA:BGEN HLOBDELL

JCS/J-5:COL.CONNELL (INFORMED)

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TO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

INFO ALL NATO CAPITALS

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MCAP, NATO

SUBJ: PRESS GUIDANCE: NAVAL MODERNIZATION

REF: USNATO 3523 (NOTAL)

1. YOU MAY DRAW UPON THE FOLLOWING ONLY IN RESPONSE TO
QUERIES:

A. QTE. STATEMENT: SINCE 1968 THE US NAVY HAS UNDERTAKEN
A MAJOR EFFORT TO IMPROVE AND UPGRADE THE FLEET. IN ORDER
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TO MAKE MAJOR MANPOWER AND FUNDING COMMITMENTS IN MODERN

EQUIPMENT, IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY TO REDUCE THE NUMBERS OF OLD SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT IN COMMISSION AND TO USE THE FUNDS SAVED TO IMPROVE THE CAPABILITY OF THE FLEET.

THE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IS BEING CARRIED OUT SYSTEMATICALLY UNDER A CONCEPT KNOWN AS THE QTE HIGH-LOW MIX. UNQTE THIS CONCEPT ENTAILS THE IMPROVEMENT AND PROCUREMENT OF HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED SHIPS - AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, SUBMARINES AND MISSILE EQUIPPED DESTROYERS - WHICH CAN PERFORM IN A HIGH THREAT ENVIRONMENT. PROCURED ALONG WITH THESE SHIPS WILL BE A LARGER NUMBER OF A NEW GENERATION OF LESS SOPHISTICATED AND LESS EXPENSIVE SHIPS. THESE SHIPS ARE DESIGNED TO OPERATE IN LOWER THREAT AREAS. THE LOW MIX OF SHIPS IS REPLACING THE BULK OF THE NAVY'S AGING, WORN OUT ESCORTS AND ANTISUBMARINE WARFARE SHIPS AND WILL BE SUPERIOR IN CAPABILITY TO THE SHIPS BEING REPLACED.

SINCE THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM STARTED, THE NAVY WILL HAVE BEEN REDUCED FROM 920 SHIPS TO ABOUT 520 SHIPS BY THE END OF THIS FISCAL YEAR. UNQTE

B. QTE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Q1. WHY ARE THESE SHIPS BEING DROPPED FROM THE FORCE STRUCTURE?

A1. THESE SHIPS ARE BEING DROPPED FROM THE FORCE STRUCTURE SO THAT THE NAVY CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE ITS FUNDS IN ORDER TO PROCEED WITH ITS PLANNED MODERNIZATION PROGRAM.

Q2. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO SHIPS WHICH ARE BEING DROPPED?

A2. THE OLDER, WORN-OUT SHIPS WILL BE SCRAPPED. THOSE WHICH STILL HAVE MILITARY UTILITY WILL BE KEPT IN THE RESERVE FLEET OR TRANSFERRED UNDER THE U.S. SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

Q3. WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT ON NATO?

A3. WITH THE FUNDS SAVED BY THIS ACTION THE NAVY WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL

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ABLE TO PROCEED WITH ITS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WHICH WILL ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF UNITS OF MUCH GREATER CAPABILITY IN THE FUTURE. UNQTE.

2. YOU SHOULD BEAR IN MIND THAT WE MUST PROTECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF NATO DISCUSSIONS OF OUR NAVAL CHANGES AND THAT THESE DISCUSSIONS ARE STILL CONTINUING. FOR THIS REASON THE NATO ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE

PLAYED DOWN RATHER THAN EMPHASIZED BY ANY DISCUSSION OF
SPECIFICS.

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